Chapter VIII

THE MNEMIC BIOLOGY AND THE KEY PROBLEMS OF MEMORY AND INSTINCT: SEMON, RI^NANO BLEULER

THE WORDS ' memory ' and [c] instinct' stand for two closely allied problems little considered by the great majority of biologists. Yet both remembering (using that word in the widest sense) and instinctive action imply organization of some elaborate kind—organization on a higher plane than that manifested in the formation of the various tissues and organs of the body in general. And both are intimately connected with that adaptation of organic process to special and varying circumstances which is the essential evidence of teleological activity, and which reaches its fullest expression in what we call the intelligent striving of man or animal towards his goal. The biologist proper is not equipped in any way for approaching these phenomena, and is apt to dismiss both kinds as outside his sphere, and, therefore, outside the sphere of science ; or is content with the banal view that memory is just the tendency of a process to repeat itself the more readily, the more often it has occurred; and instinctive action merely a stereotyped mode of mechanical reflex response, a little more complex than the simpler reflexes, such as the knee-jerk.

Yet it seems not unlikely that by the study of these higher manifestations of organization we

may throw light upon those lower forms of bodily organization